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## TRANSPORT AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION CONSULTATION

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on a series of questions posed by the Social Exclusion Unit (part of the Cabinet Office) on the reasons why transport can prevent people from taking part in a range of activities. A response to the consultation is required by 28<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) has been tasked by the Prime Minister to look into the nature of transport barriers to accessing work, health care and other activities and to develop policies to remove them.
- 2.2 The Government has defined social exclusion as '*a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown.*'
- 2.3 The SEU is now seeking to gather a broad range of views and opinions on these issues and has circulated a long questionnaire. A copy is attached to this report and some suggested responses are provided below.

### 3 RESPONSE

- 3.1 Q.1 The list appears to cover key activities.
- Q.2 Public transport provision in the rural parts of the District is an important barrier for residents travelling to work and many of the other activities listed. There is no doubt that public transport provision in rural areas continues to decline.
- Q.4 Suggested response would be a,c,d,e,g,h,i and s.
- Q.5 Many of these problems have become worse in recent years.
- Q.6 Insufficient information to respond.
- Q.7 For d, f, i and l, cost would be a key consideration.
- Q.9 District is responsible for licensing taxis, but the issues listed would not be directly taken into account.

- Q.12 Probably not. It is well nigh impossible to influence private Bus Companies in their decisions on frequency, routing and so on.
- Q.15 One of the key issues seems to be the availability of frequent, reliable bus services in rural areas. Whilst the Government does give some attention to this issue, more resources are required and there must be more flexibility in deciding the routes for subsidised services.
- Q.16 Without adequate resourcing, progress will inevitably be patchy.
- Q.17 Local people certainly have ample opportunity to feed into the Local Transport Plan. However, most bus services are commercially operated and residents have little or no real opportunity to influence decisions about routes, frequency, etc.
- Q.18 Funding.
- Q.19 These could make a contribution.
- Q.20 Funding of Local Transport Plans does not reach the levels required for full implementation. Inevitably, judgements about the allocation of the budget by Highway Authorities mean resources to tackle transport barriers to accessing key services and activities are limited.
- Q.21 With current levels of funding for Local Transport Plans, with great difficulty.
- Q.22 It is possible this might be the case, but only on a minority of rural routes. Most would not develop sufficiently to provide the level of flexibility required.
- Q.23 Items e, f, g and h are important for disabled people and the elderly.
- Q.24 Partnerships may very well provide opportunities to improve services. For example, Health Authorities linking with Bus Companies, Taxi firms, etc., to find ways of making it easier for patients to be taken to and from hospital.
- Q.28 There is no doubt that trips to the Bank or Building Society have for many been eliminated as a result of the Internet. Elderly people very often continue to collect their Pensions from the Post Office, but there is of course no need for this, given current banking arrangements.
- Q.29 For most problems, increased resources are required.

Q.30 Home Zones and Quiet Lanes.

Q.34 The Planning system should already be taking such issues into account.

Q.35 Certainly transport is a key part of deliberations on Local Plan policy issues and in assessing planning applications. It is also important for District Authorities to produce their own Transport Strategy documents to dovetail into the Local Transport Plan, the Local Plan and other documents such as the Crime and Disorder Strategy.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**

That, subject to additional comments from Members, this report forms the basis of the Council's response to the Social Exclusion Unit's consultation on Transport and Social Exclusion. (HPS)

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#### **Background Papers:**

Transport and Social Exclusion Consultation – Social Exclusion Unit July 2001

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